REMARKS

The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the amendments above and the arguments set forth fully below. Claims 1-45 were previously pending in this application. Within the Office Action, Claims 1-45 have been rejected. By the above amendment, Claims 1, 4-6, 12, 15-17, 23, 26-28, 35, 38-40 and 45 have been amended and Claims 3, 14, 25, and 37 have been canceled. Accordingly, Claims 1, 2, 4-13, 15-24, 26-36 and 38-45 are currently pending in this application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Within the Office Action, Claims 1-44 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,253,188 issued to Witek et al. (hereinafter "Witek") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,133,938 issued to James (hereinafter "James") further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,292,894 issued to Chipman et al. (hereinafter "Chipman").

Witek teaches a system and method for providing classified ads over the Internet. Internet users can connect to a Newspaper web server and central Web application server to search for and obtain classified ads. Ad records are stored in ad database servers 20 for providing classified ad records on request to application servers 16. To search the ad records, the search process is divided into two principle parts. The first part includes a system entry and pre-selection sequence, and the second part includes a record selection sequence. [Witek, col. 12, lines 10-13] More specifically, in the first part the user enters the system and specifies the category of classified ads to be searched. Thereafter, as the user navigates to the respective selected category, the user further specifies a subcategory for the particular category selected. [Witek, col. 12, lines 27-37] The selected category and subcategory pair is identified by a category/subcategory ID 46. The second part of the search process includes entering a formal record selection query containing the specific parameters for the ad records the user wishes to see. The specific parameters are entered as primary selection parameters 60 and as secondary selection parameters 62. In summary, the first part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on category, or in other words a hierarchical search. [Witek, col. 13, lines 30-46] The second part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on entered parameters, in other words keyword search or parametric search.

Witek does not teach a dichotomous key search. Further, Witek does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, Witek does not teach that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search can be used at any location within the database.

James teaches a descriptor mechanism for assuring indivisible execution of AV/C operations. James does not teach a dichotomous key search. Further, James does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, three or more different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, James does not teach that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search can be used when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure.

Chipman teaches a system, method, and medium for retrieving, organizing, and utilizing networked data. Chipman does not teach a dichotomous key search. Further, Chipman does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, three or more different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, Chipman does not teach that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search can be used when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure.

Accordingly, neither Witek, James, Chipman nor their combination teaches a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, James, Chipman nor their combination teaches performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, three or more different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, neither Witek, James, Chipman nor their combination teaches that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search can be used when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure.

The independent claim 1 is directed to a method of accessing information within a directory tree structure. The method of claim 1 comprises the steps of formatting a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a

corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter, accessing a particular node within the directory tree structure utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, wherein when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure each of the search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, are available, setting one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node, and performing a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items. As discussed above, neither Witek, James, Chipman nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. As further discussed above, neither Witek, James, Chipman nor their combination teaches that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search can be used when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, James, Chipman and their combination.

Claim 3 has been canceled by the above amendment. Claims 2 and 4-11 all depend on the independent claim 1. As described above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, James, Chipman and their combination. Accordingly, claims 2 and 4-11 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 12 is directed to a research system for accessing information within a directory tree structure. The research system of claim 12 comprises means for formatting a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter, means for accessing a particular node within the directory tree structure utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, wherein when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure each of the search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, are available, means for setting one or more search parameters

corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node, and means for performing a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items. As discussed above, neither Witek, James, Chipman nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. As further discussed above, neither Witek, James, Chipman nor their combination teaches that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search can be used when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 12 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, James, Chipman and their combination.

Claim 14 has been canceled by the above amendment. Claims 13 and 15-22 all depend on the independent claim 12. As described above, the independent claim 12 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, James, Chipman and their combination. Accordingly, claims 13 and 15-22 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 23 is directed to a research system for accessing information within a directory tree structure. The research system of claim 23 comprises a research server configured to format a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter, to access a particular node within the directory tree structure utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, wherein when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure each of the search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, are available, to set one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node, and to perform a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items. As discussed above, neither Witek, James, Chipman nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. As further discussed above, neither Witek, James, Chipman nor their

combination teaches that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search can be used when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 23 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, James, Chipman and their combination.

Claim 25 has been canceled by the above amendment. Claims 24 and 26-34 all depend on the independent claim 23. As described above, the independent claim 23 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, James, Chipman and their combination. Accordingly, claims 24 and 26-34 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 35 is directed to a network of devices for accessing information within a directory tree structure. The network of devices of claim 35 comprises one or more computer systems configured to establish a connection with other systems, and a research server coupled to the one or more computer systems to format a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter, to access a particular node within the directory tree structure utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, wherein when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure each of the search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search, are available, to set one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node, and to perform a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items. As discussed above, neither Witek, James, Chipman nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. As further discussed above, neither Witek, James, Chipman nor their combination teaches that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, and dichotomous key search can be used when accessing each of the nodes within the directory tree structure. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 35 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, James, Chipman and their combination.

Claim 37 has been canceled by the above amendment. Claims 36 and 38-44 all depend on the independent claim 35. As described above, the independent claim 35 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, James, Chipman and their combination. Accordingly, claims 36 and 38-44 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Within the Office Action, Claim 45 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Witek in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,604,772 issued to Botto et al. (hereinafter "Botto"). The applicants respectfully disagree.

As discussed above, Witek teaches a system and method for providing classified ads over the Internet. Internet users can connect to a Newspaper web server and central Web application server to search for and obtain classified ads. Ad records are stored in ad database servers 20 for providing classified ad records on request to application servers 16. To search the ad records, the search process is divided into two principle parts. The first part includes a system entry and pre-selection sequence, and the second part includes a record selection sequence. [Witek, col. 12, lines 10-13] More specifically, in the first part the user enters the system and specifies the category of classified ads to be searched. Thereafter, as the user navigates to the respective selected category, the user further specifies a subcategory for the particular category selected. [Witek, col. 12, lines 27-37] The selected category and subcategory pair is identified by a category/subcategory ID 46. The second part of the search process includes entering a formal record selection query containing the specific parameters for the ad records the user wishes to see. The specific parameters are entered as primary selection parameters 60 and as secondary selection parameters 62. In summary, the first part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on category, or in other words a hierarchical search. [Witek, col. 13, lines 30-46] The second part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on entered parameters, in other words keyword search or parametric search.

Witek does not teach a dichotomous key search. Further, Witek does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, Witek does not teach that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search can be used at any location within the database.

Botto teaches a transmission system and modem utilizing coded modulation. Botto appears to be cited because of its teaching of a zone searching module which determines a searched zone by dichotomy. There is no motivation to warrant the combination of Witek and Botto. There is no hint, teaching or suggestion in either of Witek or Botto to warrant their combination.

Even if considered proper, the combination of Witek and Botto does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Neither, Witek, Botto nor their combination teach that each utilization of the search module includes the availability of the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search and the parametric search.

The independent Claim 45 is directed to a method of accessing information within a directory tree structure. The method of Claim 45 comprises the steps of formatting a searchable database into the directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising a collection of related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, further wherein each specific node provides a corresponding set of parameters by which each related item of data corresponding to the specific node is defined by setting each parameter with a corresponding value associated with the data item, thereby forming a set parameter, accessing a particular node within the directory tree structure utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search, wherein each utilization of the search module includes the availability of the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search, and the parametric search, setting one or more search parameters corresponding to the set of parameters of the particular node, and performing a parametric search from any node within the directory tree structure using the one or more set search parameters corresponding to the particular node to match the one or more search parameters to the set parameters for each item of data corresponding to the particular node, thereby generating one or more matching discrete data items. As described above, the combination of Witek and Botto is not proper. As further discussed above, even if considered proper, neither Witek, Botto nor their combination teach that each utilization of the search module includes the availability of the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search, and the parametric search. For at least these reasons, the independent Claim 45 is allowable over the teachings of Witek, Botto and their combination.

For the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, she is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 530-9700.

Respectfully submitted,
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-17-